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ABSTRACT

A biogaphy of W. E. B. Du Bois is presented in this book for young children. Du Bois is widely regarded as the foremost black intellectual from the United States. A great scholar, he was the first black American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Of his written work he is probably best known for his essays, "The Souls of Black Folk." Du Bois was a strong advocate of black Americans. He was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Du Bois also was very concerned with the situation of blacks from other parts of the world. He helped to initiate a movement, called Pan Africanism, to unite people of African descent and to gain independence for African colonies. Du Bois also was well known as a champion for world peace. Accompanying the text of this biography are numerous illustrations. (DB)

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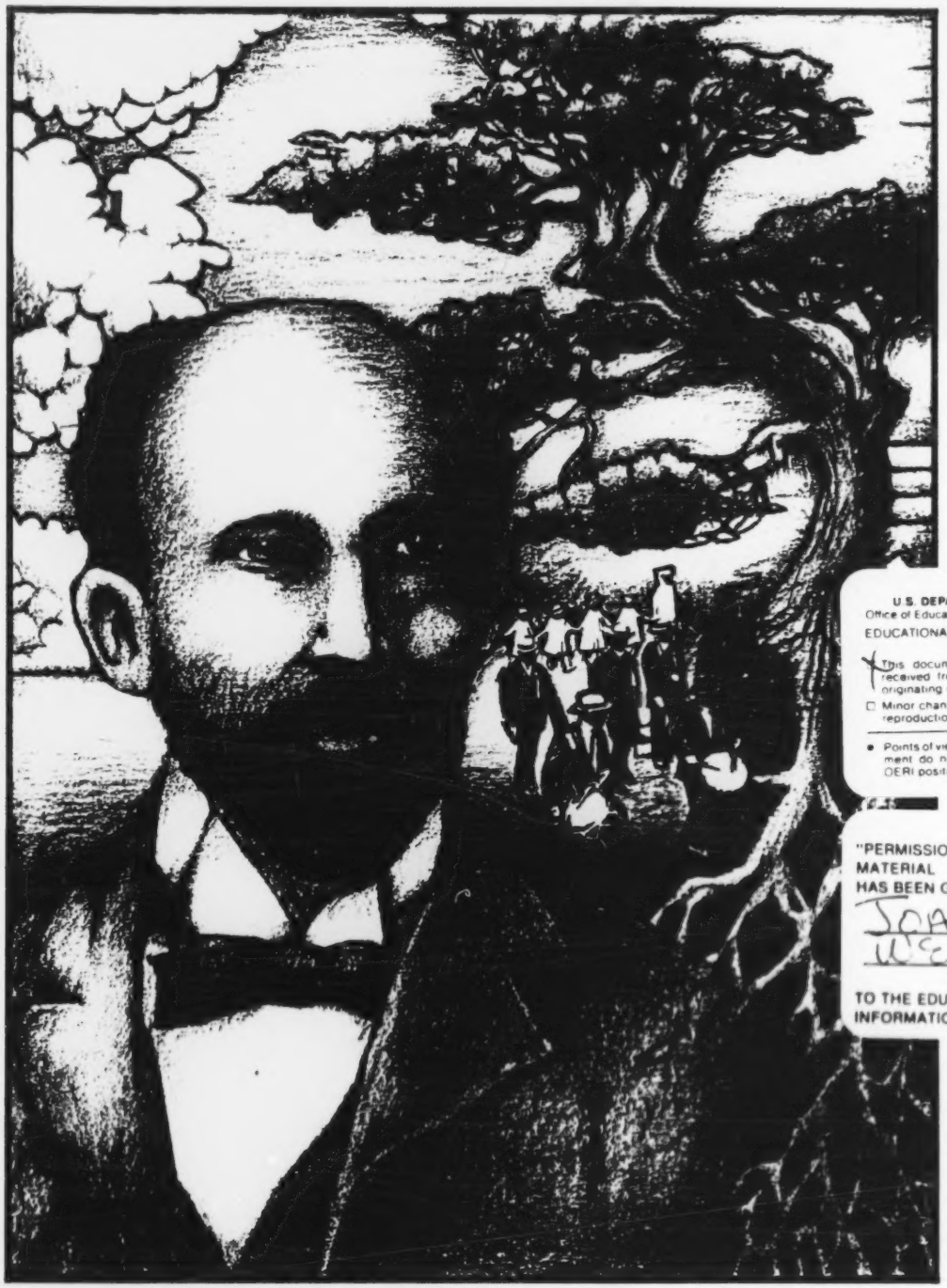
with a message from Benjamin L. Hooks

W. E. B. DU BOIS:
Crusader for Peace



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Written by: **Kathryn T. Cryan-Hicks**
Illustrated by: **David H. Huckins**

Picture-book Biography Series 2

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Crusader for Peace

with a message from
Benjamin L. Hooks

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Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., Lowell, Massachusetts

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A Word on the Literature

Adults seeking more detailed information on W.E.B. Du Bois may wish to read one of his three autobiographies. *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (1921), and *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940) originally published by Harcourt, Brace, have been reprinted by Kraus International Publications. The third autobiography, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of its First Century* was written in 1960 and published in 1968 by International Publishers.

Some noteworthy biographies include *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical* by Manning Marable (Twayne Publishers, 1986) directed to the adult reader. The biography that best presents the personal side of Du Bois is one written by his second wife, Shirley Graham Du Bois – *His Day is Marching On: A Memoir of W.E.B. Du Bois* (J.B. Lippincott Company, 1971); this would be appropriate for high school age and older. A nice presentation directed to young adults is Mark Stafford *W.E.B. Du Bois: Scholar and Activist* (Chelsea House Publications, 1989).

The complete published works of W.E.B. Du Bois are available through Kraus International Publications. The letters and previously unpublished works of W.E.B. Du Bois are available through the University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, MA.

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Benjamin L. Hooks

This is the story of W. E. B. Du Bois, whom many people regard as the foremost black intellectual from the United States. There is no question that the outspoken Du Bois was, for many years, a strong voice of black aspirations, not only in the United States but in other parts of the world.

Du Bois was a strong advocate of the rights of black Americans. He also had universal concerns, among them his vision of world peace.

Du Bois was a great scholar. He wrote a major history of the African slave trade. His work, "The Philadelphia Negro," was considered a break-through effort in sociology. Many people know him best for his searing essays, "The Souls of Black Folk."

Du Bois was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was controversial during his long life, but most people now agree that he was fearless in standing by his principles.

Benjamin L. Hooks

William enjoyed all of the changing seasons in Great Barrington.

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The Sheltered Valley

n 1868, the Civil War had been over for only three years and in the South former slaves were filled with hope as they tested their new freedom. In the North, quite distant from the changes of the reconstruction, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born.

William was a "Northern Negro." His mother's family, the Burghardts, had lived for generations in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The Burghardts were among the oldest inhabitants of this quiet town sheltered by the great Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts. Since social prestige was based on ancestry and property, his family received much respect from their neighbors.

William's father, Alfred Du Bois, a newcomer to the area, was never really accepted by the Burghardts. They considered him a dreamer and unreliable. When William was just a small child, Alfred left Great Barrington never to return.

William was brought up by his mother, Mary. They lived on the small allowance she earned from housekeeping jobs and on rent received from William's uncle who boarded with them.

Great Barrington was a child's paradise. In the summer William could swim in the lakes and streams and run across green fields. There were caves and orchards to explore and mountains to climb. In winter there was ice skating and coasting.

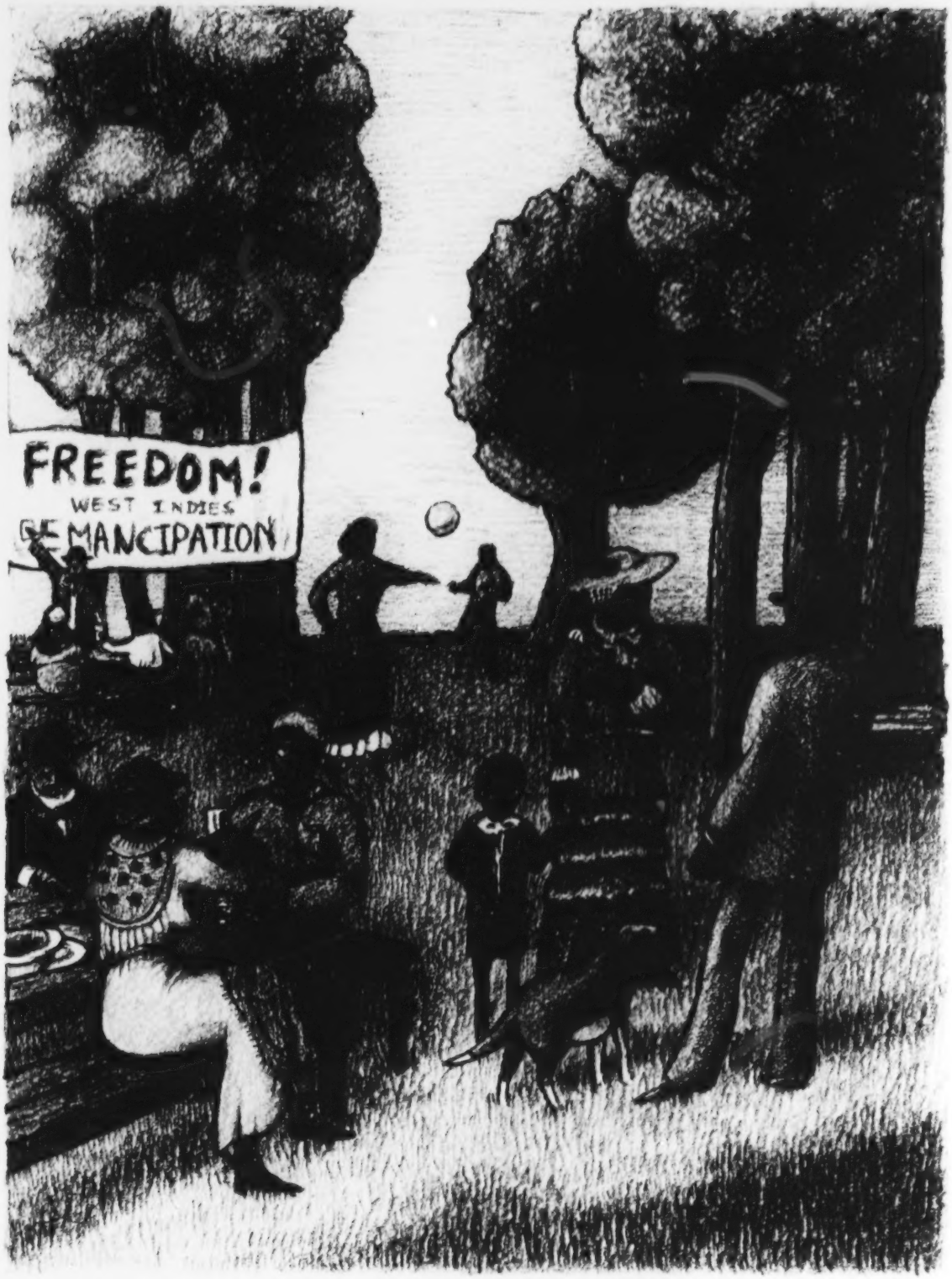
Church was an important part of William's early life. He and his mother attended the Congregational church close to their home. He especially liked Sunday School and regularly led in discussions. Perhaps guided by the inscription on the altar of his church, "The truth shall make you free," William often asked the most difficult questions of his teachers.

William's first glimpse outside the sheltered world of Great Barrington came from the town's bookstore run by Mr. Johnny Morgan. Mr. Morgan took a liking to William and allowed him to browse through the books and magazines in the store. On one occasion William spotted an expensive five-volume history of England that was much too expensive for him to buy. Johnny Morgan made a special arrangement so that young William could purchase the volumes on credit —an unusual method at that time. It was Johnny Morgan who helped William get a job as the Great Barrington correspondent to the *Springfield Republican*, a well-known Massachusetts newspaper.

In William's third year of high school, he received an invitation to visit his paternal grandfather, Alexander Du Bois, in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He thought of this as his first great excursion into the world.

Although it was only a short visit, he was left with a grand impression of his relative. Grandfather Du Bois was very formal and displayed such refined manners. One day during his stay, William watched with awe as his grandfather, dressed in a long black coat, greeted a visitor and held a crystal wine glass in a toast. William was not familiar with such ceremony and formality in the Burghardt household. The sense of grandeur impressed him.

On his return to Great Barrington, his escort, a friend of Grandfather Du Bois, stopped at a picnic in Providence, Rhode Island. Thousands of people of African descent were celebrating the West Indian Emancipation. William had never seen so many people of all shades of color. He was filled with pride of his African heritage.



William had never seen so many people of all shades of color.

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A new student at school refused to take William's calling card.

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The problems of the South, however, still seemed remote to William and his life in western Massachusetts. He was far from the racial prejudice that Blacks in the South and in most parts of the country had to live with everyday.

One incident occurred at William's school that made him realize the fragile nature of his charmed boyhood. One afternoon his classmates took to exchanging visiting cards—small engraved calling cards. Exchanging visiting cards among friends and acquaintances was customary in William's day. The exchange was a cheery one until William offered one of his cards to a new student. She refused to take it from him and her hateful glance made William feel separate from his classmates.

The incident made him angry, and that anger fired his spirit. He vowed that he would be better than those who treated him with such disrespect. He excelled in his school work; he advanced grades more quickly than his peers.

In 1883, at the age of sixteen, he was graduated from high school with high honors. His mother was filled with pride as she listened to his moving graduation speech on the life of Wendell Phillips, a famous abolitionist who had died that year. William's next step, he believed, would be to attend Harvard University.

William left Great Barrington to attend Fisk University in Nashville.

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The Beginning of His Understanding

lthough William had looked forward to attending Harvard University, fate and friends had other plans for him. The year after his high school graduation he worked as a timekeeper on a construction project in town. During that year his mother died and three local men became William's advisors on the matter of college and career. They encouraged him to enroll at Fisk University, a college for Black students in Nashville, Tennessee.

One of William's advisors was Reverend C. C. Painter, a Congregational minister who had spent time with the Federal Indian Board in the South. He believed that William could find his future field of work in the South. Painter managed to convince several churches in town to fund a scholarship for William to cover his college expenses.

In the fall of 1885, William gathered together his personal belongings and a few mementos from his Great Barrington childhood, including a few pieces of the blue china his mother had set on the family's holiday table. Finally, he was on a train on his way to Fisk University. On the last leg of his journey, through Kentucky, he sat next to a young fellow named Ortho Porter. Ortho was also on his way to Fisk. The two became fast friends, and, before they arrived in Nashville, decided to become roommates.

Du Bois had to bring a chair from his landlady's house to school each day.

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William was excited about being at a southern campus with so many students of color. It made him aware of the isolation he had experienced in Great Barrington. He was determined to learn more about these people with whom he shared his African ancestry.

And learn he did. He gained a wide and vivid picture of the postwar South from students who had lived with the insult of segregation on a daily basis—many who had seen first-hand such horrors of racial bigotry as mobs and lynchings.

The Civil War had been over for almost twenty years and conditions in the South were not much better then they had been before the war. William wanted to do what he could to help improve the conditions of the freed slaves. So, during his summer vacations from Fisk, he set out for rural Tennessee to teach school.

He taught nearly thirty students in a small, windowless log hut that had once been used to store corn. His desk was made from three pieces of wood, and his chair, which he borrowed from his landlady, had to be returned each afternoon. The students, many of whom had to walk long distances to attend class, sat on hard wooden benches.

Negro spirituals made a big impression on Du Bois.

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As his students learned reading and spelling, William learned about their lives in that rural village. Many of them lived with their families in one or two room shacks with dirt floors. Their beds were often pallets of moss covered with cloth. William slept and ate in the homes of his students, and on the weekends, attended church with the families in his school district at either the Methodist or Baptist church. He was not used to the spirited expressions of worship he observed in the southern church services. He called it "old time religion," but he listened respectfully to the "Negro songs by those who made them . . . in the land of their American birth."

After three years he graduated from Fisk. He then applied for and won a scholarship to Harvard. In 1888 he was on his way to the college he had dreamed of attending. Now, however, he had even more reason for enrolling in what he believed to be the best college in the nation. He needed top training if he were to help lead the freed slaves from their bondages of poverty and repression.

At Harvard, William was admitted as a third year student because of his outstanding academic record at Fisk. He studied philosophy, history, economics and social science. Yet even at Harvard, one of the nation's top schools, he was not free from racial prejudice. He had a good singing voice and he loved music, so he tried out for the Glee Club. He realized later, after he was rejected, that the College "could not afford to have a Negro in its Glee Club traveling about the country." On another occasion, at a meeting of the Philosophical Club, a fellow member, who was a White Southerner, refused to sit next to him.

In spite of these and similar insults, William was a superb student and graduated with honors. It was at Harvard that he gained his first national recognition. At his graduation ceremonies, he gave an impressive speech on Jefferson Davis, the former president of the Confederate States. He described Davis as the "champion of a people fighting to be free in order that another people should not be free." His speech received rave reviews in several national magazines and newspapers.

William was not finished with his formal education yet. He desired further training at the world's best educational center, which, at that time, was considered to be Germany. He applied for and received a grant and loan to study at the University of Berlin. He started classes in the fall of 1892.

His two years in Europe added a refreshing perspective to his view of the world. When he was not in class or studying, he traveled through European villages and towns where race was not an issue as it was in the United States. He found it easier to see through a person's skin color to the person inside, and he felt Europeans treated him with that same unbiased respect.

The freedom allowed by his new vision gave him a deeper understanding of human nature and discrimination. He began to see similarities between the situation of Black Americans and those of other oppressed groups of people, in particular, the colonized in Africa and Asia.

"On mountain and valley, in home and school, I met men and women as I had never met them before. Slowly they became, not white folks, but folks. The unity beneath all life clutched me." — W.E.B. Du Bois

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Du Bois was somewhat of an oddity in southern Ohio.

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The Young Scholar

illiam's first job, upon his return to the United States in 1894, was professor of Greek and Latin at Wilberforce College in Xenia, Ohio. Wilberforce was a college established by the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) to educate Black students.

Du Bois was somewhat of an oddity in southern Ohio. He arrived at his new position dressed in a high silk hat, gloves and a walking cane—accessories from his days as a student in Berlin. The administrators of the college were not overly satisfied with his attitude, which seemed a bit too liberal for their conservative tastes. On the other hand, Du Bois was not entirely satisfied with the curriculum. For two years he tried unsuccessfully to include a course in sociology, the study of human society.

He did, however, have successes in other aspects of his life's plan while in Xenia. He completed his doctoral dissertation, a major paper required to earn his degree, entitled *The Suppression of the African-Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638 - 1870.* Du Bois then became the first Black American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University, and was known from that time on as Doctor Du Bois. But just as important to Du Bois was his meeting Nina Gomer, a quiet, dark-eyed Wilberforce undergraduate from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, whom he married in 1896.

Finally, the opportunity to work in his field of interest came from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Du Bois and his young bride moved to a room above a cafeteria in an impoverished part of the Black community of Philadelphia called the Seventh Ward. For a year, under the title of Assistant Instructor, he performed a sociological study of that community. He worked day and night, personally interviewing 5,000 people. He scoured libraries for data and compiled two centuries of history of the people of the Seventh District.

Dr. Du Bois stepped away from his work long enough to bring his wife to Great Barrington. He then returned to his work in Philadelphia, while Nina stayed in Massachusetts to await the birth of their first baby. On October 2, 1897, their son, Burghardt Gomer Du Bois, was born.

The shadow of death consumed their baby.

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The results of Du Bois' Philadelphia research were published as *The Philadelphia Negro.* The work, which was well received in the scholarly community, so impressed the president of Atlanta University that Du Bois was offered the position of Professor of Economics and History at that school.

Dr. Du Bois, along with his wife and infant son, moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he contined his studies of African Americans. In addition to teaching, he was responsible for directing the University's annual conference on the plight of urban Blacks. He became well-known in this area of work and was given the title of "Leading Social Scientist" on Black America.

In 1899, in the midst of his professional triumphs, he suffered a tremendous personal tragedy. His eighteen month old son became sick with dysentery brought on from pollution in the city's water system. For ten days the distraught parents tried desperately to nurse him back to health, until on the evening of the tenth day, the shadow of death consumed their baby.

With the death of her son, Mrs. Du Bois nearly lost her will to live. Another child, Nina Yolande Du Bois, was born the following year, but Mrs. Du Bois never stopped mourning for her first-born's unnecessary death.

As if to relieve some of his grief, Dr. Du Bois threw himself into his work. In an essay titled "Of the Passing of the First-born," he wrote a moving account of his son's short life and tragic death. In 1903, this essay and thirteen others were published in a book called *The Souls of Black Folk.* This book was to become the most widely-read of his twenty-one published books.

The Souls of Black Folk was a book the masses of people could understand and appreciate. He likened the alienation that Black people in the United States endure to living behind "a veil of color." He also repeated his famous assessment of the coming century that the "problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line."

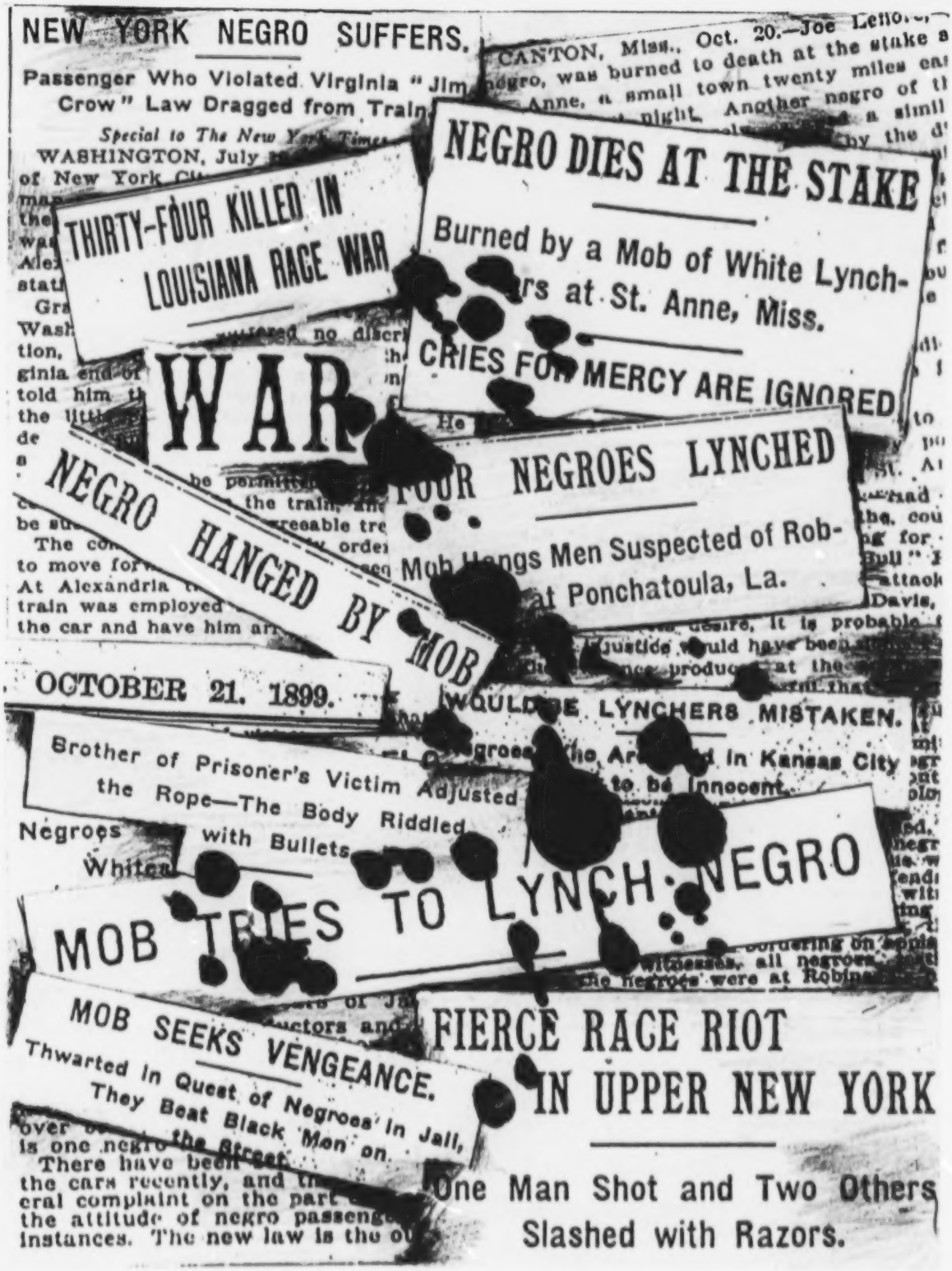
Niagra Movement and the Birth of the NAACP

y the turn of the century, any hope for true freedom and equality that had been born with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation had faded away. In the South, individual states began to enact their own legislation to deny people of color their rights to vote, to sit alongside Whites in streetcars, and to patronize hotels and theatres. This dishonest legislation was known as the "Jim Crow" laws, named after a notorious character from the minstrel shows.

In addition to being denied their rights, Black people were subjected to lynchings and mob violence. Most of the murderers were never arrested or punished. The veil separating the white world's power and opportunity from the prison of color was woven even more heavily with threads of hatred and blood.

In 1905, Du Bois and twenty-nine other concerned African Americans tried valiantly to unravel the edges of that veil, when, at Du Bois' call, they organized the Niagra Movement. In a meeting held in Buffalo, New York, not far from Niagra Falls, they called for the right to vote, justice and education for Black Americans, and an end to segregation. In the effort to achieve these goals, the organization's credo, written by Dr. Du Bois, stated clearly "We do not believe in violence."

Even so, a wave of violence in the form of race riots hit most major northern cities. One of these riots raged for two days in Springfield, Illinois, just two miles from the grave of Abraham Lincoln. Hundreds of Blacks were forced to flee the city when their homes were looted and burned. Over seventy people were seriously injured.


NEW YORK NEGRO SUFFERS.
Passenger Who Violated Virginia "Jim Crow" Law Dragged from Train
NEGRO DIES AT THE STAKE
Burned by a Mob of White Lynchers at St. Anne, Miss.
CRIES FOR MERCY ARE IGNORED
THIRTY-FOUR KILLED IN LOUISIANA RACE WAR
WAR
FOUR NEGROES LYNCHED
Mob Hangs Men Suspected of Robbery at Ponchatoula, La.
NEGRO HANGED BY MOB
OCTOBER 21. 1899.
Brother of Prisoner's Victim Adjusted the Rope—The Body Riddled with Bullets
MOB TRIES TO LYNCH NEGRO
MOB SEEKS VENGEANCE.
Thwarted in Quest of Negroes in Jail, They Beat Black Men on the Street.
FIERCE RACE RIOT IN UPPER NEW YORK
One Man Shot and Two Others Slashed with Razors.

The veil of color was woven more heavily with hatred and blood.

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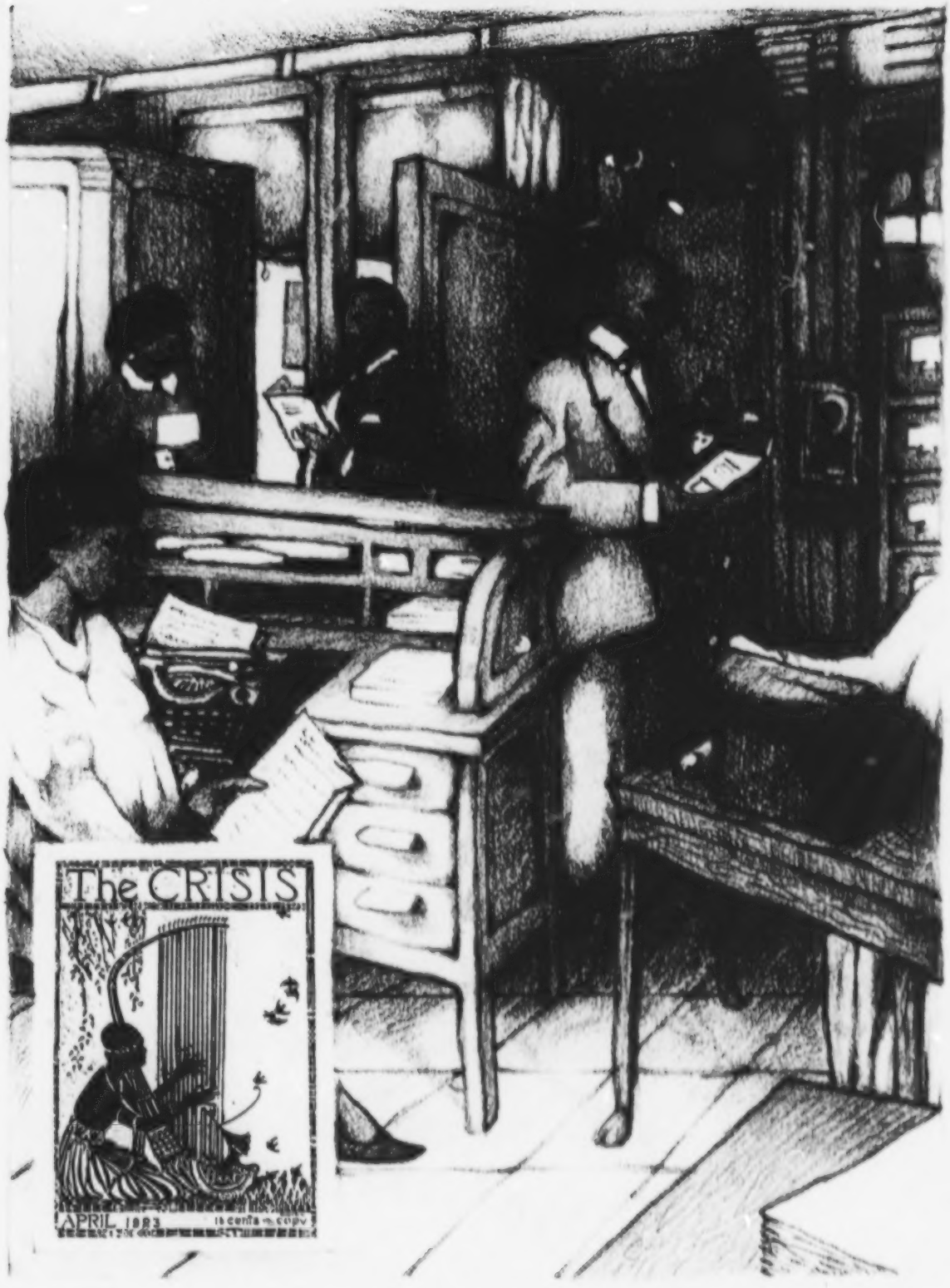

Dr. Du Bois became the Director of Publicity and Research for the NAACP and started its magazine, "Crisis".

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Among those who were outraged by the violence were Mary White Ovington, a wealthy Northerner; William English Walling, a liberal journalist from the South; and Henry Moskovitz, a Jewish social worker. These concerned citizens met at Walling's apartment in Manhattan and made plans for a conference to renew the struggle for civil and political liberty.

They asked Dr. Du Bois and the other members of the Niagra Movement to join them. Their first conference was held May 30 – June 1, 1909. From the group attending emerged a powerful civil rights organization called the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—the NAACP.

Dr. Du Bois became the Director of Publicity and Research for the NAACP and started its magazine, *Crisis*. *Crisis* was an innovative magazine for its time. It presented a new interpretation of the hopes and problems of Black people in America, and it allowed a channel for the new voice and energy of young African American poets and writers. Each issue contained the "Little Pages," a section for children. Once a year, Dr. Du Bois published a children's issue, usually with a long editorial stressing the importance of a strong education for the young.

It frustrated Du Bois to see such a void of honest information on people of African descent. In an effort to correct some of the mistaken beliefs about African people, he wrote extensively in *Crisis* and in other publications about the rich history and culture of African nations. He emphasized the critical role Africans performed in the history of civilization.

The NAACP became a powerful civil rights organization.

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Crisis helped to enlighten and to encourage people of color. The words of Dr. Du Bois inspired Black people in America and helped to build their self-esteem and bolster their spirits. He gave them courage and hope to work toward a better world.

For many years, the most popular Black leader was Booker T. Washington. Washington had told African Americans to better themselves through education, but he stressed vocational education. Dr. Du Bois went a step further. He believed that Black people needed to become more than skilled tradesmen; he knew they were capable of much more. He encouraged African Americans to enter all fields of study and to consider all careers.

Du Bois put forth a concept he termed The Talented Tenth. By this he theorized that a team of talented African Americans—a college-educated elite—acting as "leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their own people" would guide and uplift the masses. He was not willing to compromise the potential of African Americans—or allow the White race to define limits for Black people.

Du Bois' theories were radical to many White people and even to some Blacks who felt they needed to "stay in line" with Washington's more limited vision. It was this far-sighted and multi-dimensional vision of Dr. Du Bois that added fuel to the civil rights movement in the United States and in many African countries which, at that time, were under European colonial rule.

Seeking a Broader Understanding

he years Du Bois worked as editor of the *Crisis* (1910-34) spanned a stormy period of United States history which included World War I and the Great Depression.

Black people from all parts of the country joined the military service, and many fought in foreign lands beside Blacks from African colonies. At the close of the war, Black soldiers returned to the United States with a new sense of themselves and of their world. They had proven their citizenship by fighting for democracy, and felt entitled to the same rights as other citizens.

Jobs were scarce in the overcrowded cities; Whites felt threatened. The country experienced a new wave of race riots. During the summer of 1919, violence broke out in over twenty cities.

During the 1920's, in the midst of the social turmoil, a new creative energy surged in New York City. Harlem, a section of the city, became famous as the Black Renaissance capital of America. Black writers, artists and musicians gained international recognition and respect among both Black and White audiences. There was a "flowering" of African Americans in spirit as well as in art.

During this time, Du Bois wrote several books, including his first autobiography and his second novel. He staged a pageant which dramatized African American history, and even started a small theatre group. He also continued to speak out in the *Crisis* and in other publications denouncing mob violence and lynchings. Furthermore, he chastised the government for its poor treatment of Black soldiers, and he wrote articles in support of the women's suffrage movement.

There was a "flowering" of African Americans in spirit as well as in art.

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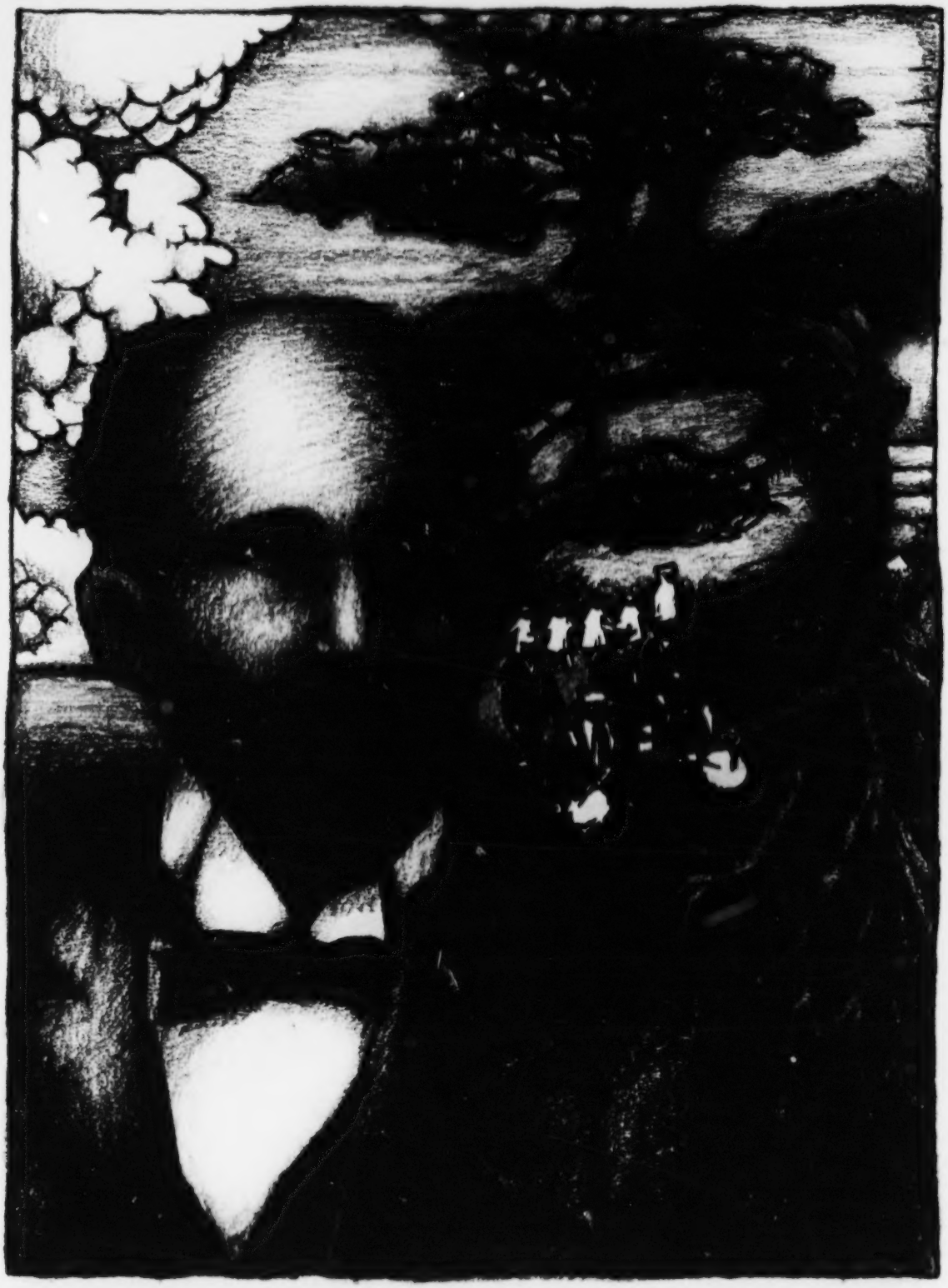
Perhaps the most important aspect of his work was his travel. During this period he traveled to several countries in Europe, including Russia, and he made his first visit to the continent of Africa. He was able to gain a wider view of world problems as well as develop a deeper perspective of the racial problems in his own country.

He understood that the root of racial discrimination, whether in the United States or in Africa, was the mistaken belief that one race of people is better than another. He believed that as long as the United States government tolerated people of color to be oppressed in other parts of the world, people in America could never be truly free.

Du Bois helped to initiate a movement, call Pan Africanism, to unite people of African descent and to gain independence for African colonies. However, his interest in uniting Africa was not shared by many people in the United States. When he tried to gather support for the first Pan African Congress in Paris in 1919, he received fifty-seven delegates. In 1921, the second Congress attracted 114 delegates. Between the years 1923 and 1945 he helped to organize three more Pan African Congresses. By the 1945 Congress, over two hundred delegates attended. Du Bois became known as the "Father of Pan Africanism." He made many close ties with people from Africa and the West Indies. Some of the participants in these congresses went on to lead their countries when independence was won—such as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya.

As Du Bois traveled and learned more about people all over the world, the "problem of the twentieth century" changed from "a simple thing of color, to a broader, deeper matter of social condition." By 1945, his developing concern for the rights of people worldwide had evolved into a crusade for world peace. He believed that the freedom of all people was the foundation of that peace. He did not suspect that one of the obstacles in his crusade would be his own government.



Du Bois inspired Black Americans to appreciate their rich history and culture.

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YOUR HAND CAN STOP ATOMIC WAR!

Thruout the world—
In China, Italy, Israel, in England and Brazil, in France and Mexico, in Finland and Poland, Sweden and the Soviet Union, in Africa and India and in the United States—
Tens of millions of people of all faiths and creeds, all races are signing this appeal.
If we, the people say NO to war
THERE WILL BE PEACE.

This appeal was issued at Stockholm in March, 1950 by the World Committee in Defense of Peace.

TRYGVE LIE, *Secretary of the United Nations, said of this Committee:*
"I bless everyone, every man and woman, who works for peace."

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS:
"The A-bomb means total destruction . . . ban it."

THOMAS MANN, *Writer, Nobel Prize Winner:*
"I have signed the Stockholm appeal. I support any movement which has peace as its aim."

WM. HOOD, *Recording Sec'y, Ford Local 600, UAW, CIO:*
"I am for world peace. If we don't have peace we won't be around to struggle for more democracy and better working conditions."

ABBE BOULIER, *French Catholic Leader:*
"God does not want the atomic bomb dropped on . . . any capital. All peoples should adhere to our appeal, adopted in Stockholm, which condemns any employment of the atomic weapon and brands as criminal that government which first uses it. We hope that other organizations fighting for peace will join us."

- **We demand the outlawing of atomic weapons as instruments of intimidation and mass murder of peoples. We demand strict international control to enforce this measure.**
- **We believe that any government which first uses atomic weapons against any other country whatsoever will be committing a crime against humanity and should be dealt with as a war criminal.**
- **We call on all men and women of good will thruout the world to sign this appeal.**

Name	*City*	

Return this petition to:

Collected by ..... *Address* .....

Made available by: PEACE INFORMATION CENTER
P. O. Box 349, Grand Central Station, New York City

The Peace Information Center encouraged Americans to sign the Stockholm appeal, a petition to abolish the atomic bomb.

Political Challenges

fter World War II, United States relations with its former ally, the Soviet Union, deteriorated, and the long "Cold War" began. Although there were no military battles, the two nations separated themselves by creating a curtain of fear and suspicion—the "Iron Curtain."

That fear and suspicion spread like disease throughout the United States. Many Americans, without even questioning, learned to view communism and the Soviets as evil. Those who did question were often "black-listed," that is, they were labeled as disloyal and not to be trusted. Most of them lost their jobs and many were jailed. In the early 1950s, Joseph R. McCarthy, a Senator from Wisconsin, took advantage of this anti-communist climate to further his political ambitions. He heightened the hysteria. This era, popularly called the era of McCarthyism, was also known as the "Red Scare" (red being the color of the communist banners and flags).

Du Bois often spoke out against this anti-communist hysteria. He joined the "Committee of One Thousand," a group of people dedicated to ending the so-called "red-baiting" of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the government's anti-communist task force. Other members of the Committee of One Thousand included famous physicist, Albert Einstein, and renowned playwright, Lillian Hellman. Instead of condemning communism, Du Bois encouraged cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States. Cooperation was vital to world peace, he argued.

In 1950, discouraged by the Cold War and in a true spirit of peace, Du Bois and several other peace activists organized a Peace Information Center to inform Americans of what other nations were doing to achieve world peace. They collected information from peace groups around the world, publishing it in newsletters called "Peacegrams." These Peacegrams were sent to churches, student groups, civic clubs, and labor unions throughout the country.

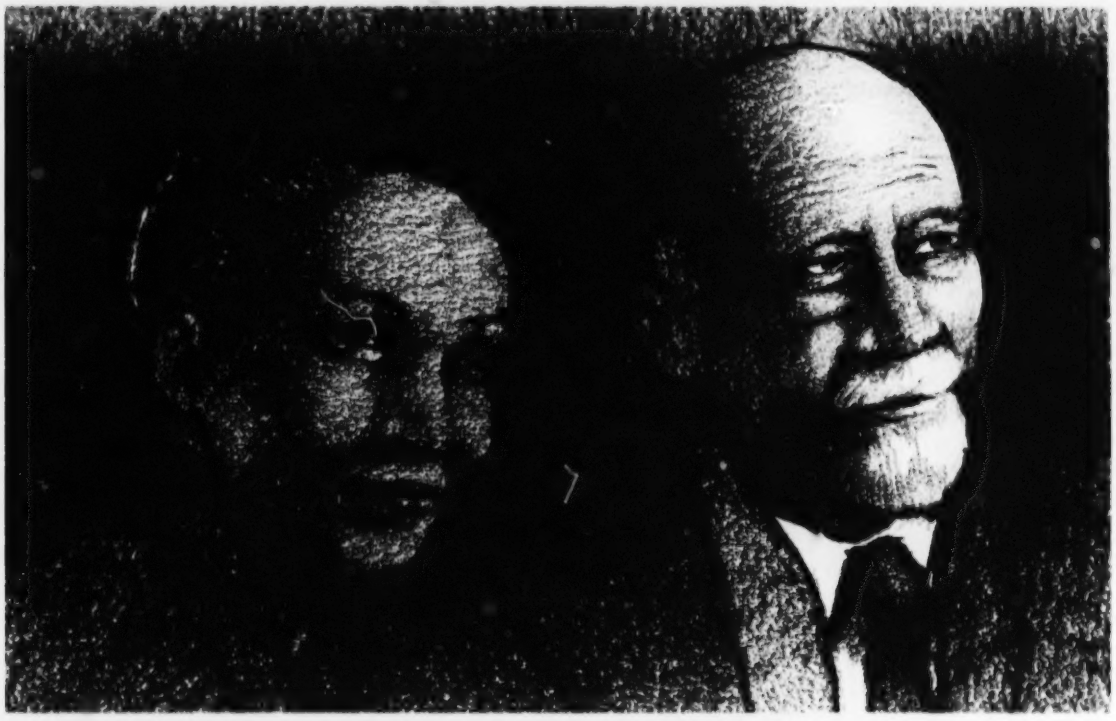
The Peace Information Center received the attention of the federal government when young volunteers were seen on the streets collecting signatures for a petition to abolish the atom bomb. Soon after, Du Bois received a letter from the Department of Justice demanding that the Peace Information Center register as "an agent of a foreign principal." This letter implied that the Peace Information Center was working for a communist government.

The staff of the Center held an emergency meeting and decided to break up the Peace Information Center. Since they were merely concerned citizens and not foreign agents, they couldn't sign a document declaring to be foreign agents. But they also knew that the government would interpret their refusal as stubborness and defiance. Not wishing to aggravate the government during the anti-red hysteria, they agreed that it would be in everyone's best interests to dissolve the Center. "We have fulfilled our commitment," Du Bois, chairman of the group, told the other members. "We have sent news of the worldwide desire for peace into every state of this land."

Du Bois thought the matter was finished and so he put his efforts toward world peace in other ways. His work was sadly interrupted in 1950, when his wife, Nina, died, at the home of their daughter in Baltimore. He returned to his boyhood town of Great Barrington to bury his wife of fifty-three years beside their son, Burghardt.

Later that year, Dr. Du Bois ran for New York State Senator as the candidate for the American Labor Party. He had no expectations of winning the election, but he knew the campaign would allow him to air his views on world peace in a way not otherwise available. He traveled across the state of New York delivering his message that war need not be an inevitable part of the future human experience; that people had the ability to wage peace. Although he lost the election, he was satisfied to have received over 250,000 votes.

Beginning in 1948, Du Bois had acted as an honorary chairman of the Council of African Affairs. This group, formed to educate the public about Africa and to aid people of African countries, was headed by Du Bois' good friend, the well-known lawyer and actor, Paul Robeson. In February 1951, the Council made plans for a fund-raising testimonial dinner to be held on February 23 in honor of Dr. Du Bois' eighty-third birthday.



His fiance was Shirley Graham, a friend and fellow activist.

While the Council made its final preparations for the dinner, Dr. Du Bois was busy making plans for his second marriage to be held four days after the testimonial on February 27. His fiancee was Shirley Graham, a friend and fellow activist. He had known her since he had spoken at her father's church in Colorado when she was a young girl.

On February 9, in the midst of these preparations, Du Bois and four other staff members of the Peace Information Center were indicted, or charged with a crime, by the federal government. The charges were not registering as "agents of a foreign principal." The indictments summoned them to Washington, D.C. for an arraignment—a court hearing—on February 16.

Shirley Graham insisted that she and Dr. Du Bois marry before the arraignment on the sixteenth. In the event that he was jailed, she explained, she would have visiting privileges if she were his wife. And so, on February 14, they held a short wedding ceremony at the New York home of Reverend Edward McGowan, a minister who had spoken at many peace meetings with Dr. Du Bois. The next evening the newlyweds were on their way to Washington, D.C. to the Federal District Court.

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Du Bois was fingerprinted, searched for weapons, and handcuffed.

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At the arraignment Du Bois spoke to the court: "It is a sad commentary that we must enter a courtroom today to plead Not Guilty to something that cannot be a crime—advocating peace and friendship between the American people and the peoples of the world. . . . In a world which has barely emerged from the horrors of the Second World War and which trembles on the brink of an atomic catastrophe, can it be criminal to hope and work for peace?"

The indicted staff members of the former Peace Information Center were led through a back door of the courtroom and down a dark staircase to a dingy corridor. There they were finger-printed, searched for hidden weapons, handcuffed and finally released on bail of one thousand dollars each. The trial was scheduled for the fall of that same year.

Although Du Bois had not yet been to trial, the media pictured him as if he were guilty. When he and his wife returned to New York City, they discovered that the hotel which had been reserved for the testimonial dinner had cancelled the contract with the Council on African Affairs. The deposit of two thousand dollars had been returned, but that didn't solve the problem of what to do with the three hundred people who had made reservations. To make matters worse, three of the major speakers for the event decided not to attend.

Finally, after a wild search for a restaurant, the dinner's planning committee located a cabaret called Small's Paradise in Harlem. The guests were notified and new speakers were booked. The arrangements were pulled together in the nick of time, and the testimonial was a tremendous success. Over seven hundred guests crowded into the tiny restaurant to pay tribute to Dr. Du Bois. Paul Robeson and noted Black Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier were among the new speakers.

On February 27, as originally planned, Du Bois and Shirley Graham were married—again. This time it was a celebration for friends and family. They then flew to Nassau for a three week honeymoon and well-deserved rest.

Upon their return to New York, Du Bois and his wife faced a major concern —how to pay the legal expenses of the upcoming trial, which eventually amounted to over $35,000. They set up a defense committee and made plans for two cross-country lecture tours to publicize the case and to raise funds.

On the second tour, after a speech in Chicago to over fifteen thousand young peace organizers, Du Bois told his wife, "We'll be all right. The young people of this country are waking up. Today, they are asking questions; tomorrow they will move to bring changes. Those young people deserved the truth, unvarnished and complete. I gave it to them with all the clarity and honesty I could command. And they took it—unafraid!"

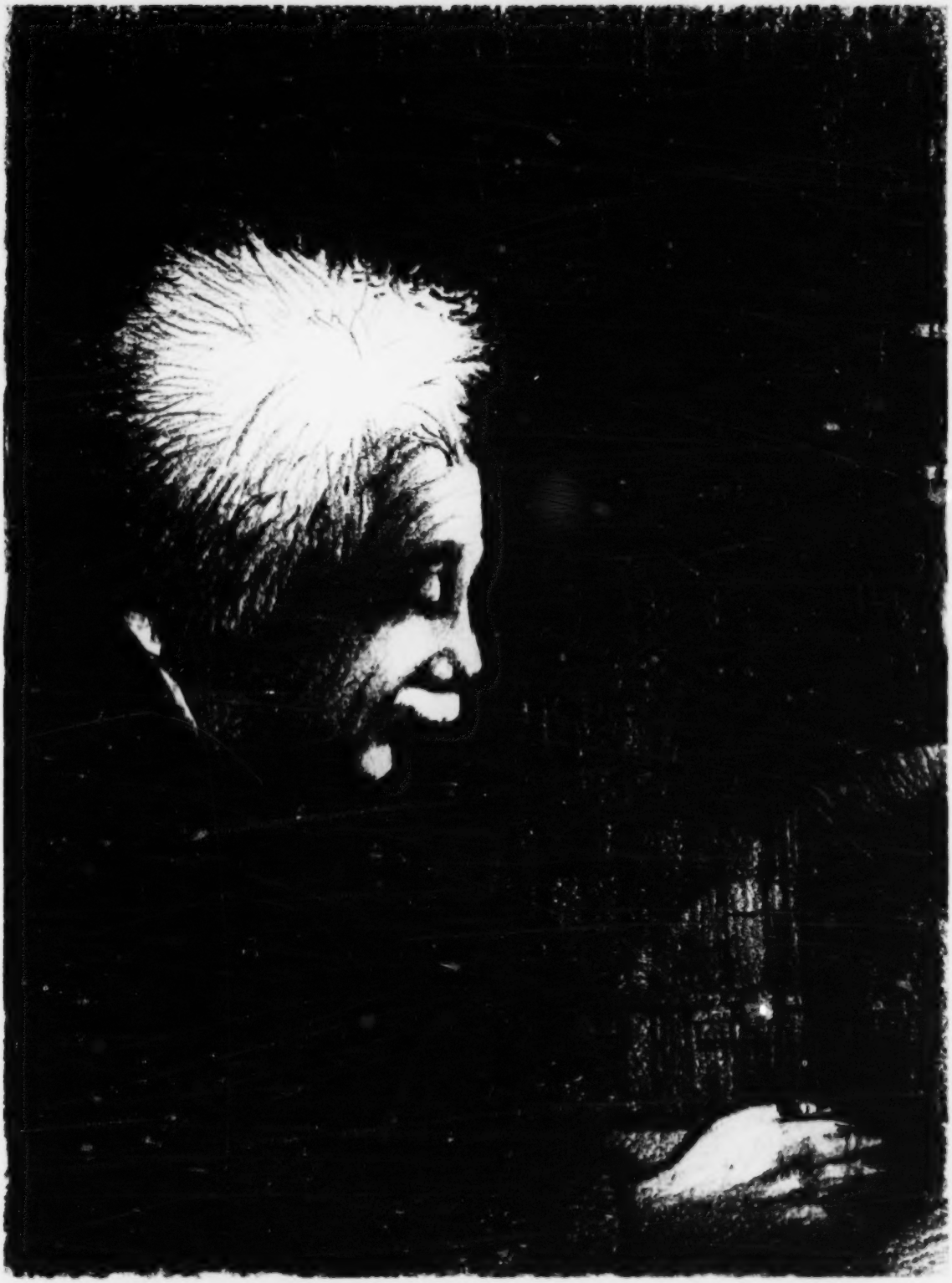
Du Bois received much support from the international community. Letters and telegrams poured into the Department of Justice from all over the world in support of Du Bois and his associates.

The trial was held in November 1951. The prosecution presented a weak case and introduced a chief witness who acted out of dubious motives. They could show no evidence linking the Peace Information Center to any foreign agent. Du Bois and the other Peace Information Center staff were declared innocent of all charges. If it had been necessary, Albert Einstein was prepared to appear as a character witness. He had written to Du Bois and offered to do anything he could in his behalf.

Although Du Bois had been found innocent of all charges, he was, in the eyes of the public, a "marked" man. Commercial publishers no longer accepted his manuscripts, newspapers were warned not to print his writings, colleges no longer invited him to lecture, and his mail was tampered with.

In 1952, when Du Bois and his wife applied for passports, they were denied by the State Department. They were told they would have to first state in writing that they were not members of the Communist Party. They refused to sign such a declaration, saying that the government did not have any right to question one's political or religious beliefs.

From 1952 until 1958, Dr. Du Bois was unable to travel outside the country. In 1953, the World Peace Council awarded him its International Peace Prize, but he could not be present at that European meeting to accept the award.



Albert Einstein had offered his support to appear as a character witness.

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By the mid-1950s, a new democratic spirit crossed the South, renewing the spirits of Blacks and Whites alike. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional in the landmark case, Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka. The 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama and similar boycotts in other cities were successful assaults against the Jim Crow laws and changed the style of the Black protest movement toward non-violent mass action.

Finally, by 1958, the "Red Scare" had faded and the Supreme Court declared that the State Department did not have the right to require passport applicants to sign affadavits stating their political beliefs. Dr. and Mrs. Du Bois reapplied and received their passports. Fearing a wrinkle in the newly changed regulations, they made their travel plans immediately.

From August 1958 until July 1959, Du Bois and his wife toured England, France, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, the U.S.S.R., and the People's Republic of China. Du Bois described this journey as, "one of the most important trips" he had ever taken. In a grandiose ceremony, he received an honorary Doctorate degree in Science of History from Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia. In East Germany, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Economics from Humboldt University, formerly the University of Berlin. He held a meeting with Soviet head of State, Nikita Khruschev, and was later awarded the Lenin Peace Prize. In China he met the leaders of the People's Republic of China: Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Based on the progress Du Bois had seen in the Soviet Union and in China, he developed a new respect for communism. At the same time, he became concerned for the future of the United States, should it continue to embrace its capitalistic style of government.

Although he was already ninety-one years old, he was still full of vigor and not yet satisfied to retire from his life's work. More important decisions lay ahead for him.

Du Bois met with heads of state from China and the Soviet Union.

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Du Bois enjoyed his daily swim.

The Journey Continues

n February 1960, Dr. Du Bois and his wife spent four weeks relaxing in the Virgin Islands to quietly celebrate his ninety-second birthday. Du Bois insisted on taking a daily swim in the ocean before breakfast. He was in remarkable physical shape and looked more like someone thirty years younger.

Work seemed to invigorate Dr. Du Bois, and he enjoyed traveling—especially by plane. In July 1960, he and his wife traveled to Ghana for the presidential inauguration of Kwame Nkrumah. During their visit, Nkrumah asked Du Bois if he would consider moving to Ghana to direct the production of an Encyclopedia Africana—a work covering all aspects of African culture and history. Such a work would help unite Africans, Nkrumah explained.

This was a project Du Bois had dreamed of for over fifty years, but lack of funding had discouraged him from undertaking it. But now, even with Nkrumah's financial support, Du Bois had a nagging doubt. At ninety-two years old, he didn't have many years left to do the work required. Just outlining the encyclopedia would take ten years, he thought. He returned to New York without giving Nkrumah an answer.

Then, in late 1960, as he thought over Nkrumah's offer, his daughter Yolande died of a heart attack. Du Bois made one last trip to the cemetery in Great Barrington. On a bleak winter day he watched as Yolande's coffin was lowered to rest beside those of his first wife and son.

Shortly after Yolande's funeral, Du Bois accepted Nkrumah's offer, but before he left the United States for Ghana there was another important decision to make.

The first Afro-Asian Writers Conference was held in October of 1958 in Tashkent.

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Du Bois' extensive experience as world traveler and social scientist led him to believe that the world was leaning more and more toward Socialism—a form of government that is owned by all citizens. Ideally, the socialist nation bases production of goods and materials on need and use. This is in contrast to capitalism, where production is based purely on profit. Du Bois believed that capitalism would eventually lead to a nation's self-destruction.

Du Bois was frustrated seeing money and power in the hands of a few wealthy capitalists, while so many disadvantaged people struggled to survive. He was afraid that the selfish aspects of capitalism in the United States were destroying democracy and oppressing people all over the world.

Du Bois believed that Communism, an extreme form of Socialism, offered an alternative as well as a means of checking the growth of capitalism. He did not believe that the communism of the Soviet Union or the communism as practiced in China were answers for the United States. But he felt that the United States needed to take some lessons from Communism and adopt a more socialist style of economy.

In October 1961, just before leaving for Ghana, Du Bois wrote a letter to the Communist Party of the United States of America to apply for membership. "Communism – the effort to give all men what they need and to ask of each the best they can contribute – this is the only way of human life." He wrote, "The path of the American Communist Party is clear; It will provide the United States with a real Third Party and thus restore democracy to this land."

Later that month, he and Shirley moved to Accra, Ghana, and were assigned a comfortable seven room house by Nkrumah. The house was surrounded by a variety of trees and lush shrubbery. The screened porch opened to a gravel walk-way crossing through orchids, orange and lemon trees, and the evening air was filled with the scents of their blossoms. Nkrumah became a close friend and frequent visitor to their home.

For almost two years Du Bois worked diligently on the Encyclopedia Africana, except for a period in 1962, when he traveled to Bucharest and London to receive medical treatment and to China for recuperation. Yet, even after surgery, at ninety-four years old, he went back to work. He would say, "I do not have precious time to waste."

By July 1960, his strength began to fade. His mind was still alert, his hearing and vision still keen and unimpaired, but he tired easily. He worked from his home putting his papers in order.

Then on August 27, 1963, Nkrumah paid a visit to Dr. Du Bois. Du Bois thanked him for making the last years of his life so pleasant. He regretted that his strength had given out before he could finish the plans for the Encyclopedia. "Forgive an old man," he said. Nkrumah assured the Doctor that he had not failed; then he left the room. His face was streaming with tears as he asked Mrs. Graham Du Bois, "Did you hear? He was telling me good-bye."

After Nkrumah's departure, Shirley Graham Du Bois returned to her husband. She sat beside him, her hand in his. He fell asleep, never to awaken.

The "Encyclopedia Africana" covered the history of African civilization from prehistoric times to the current growth in industry and the arts.

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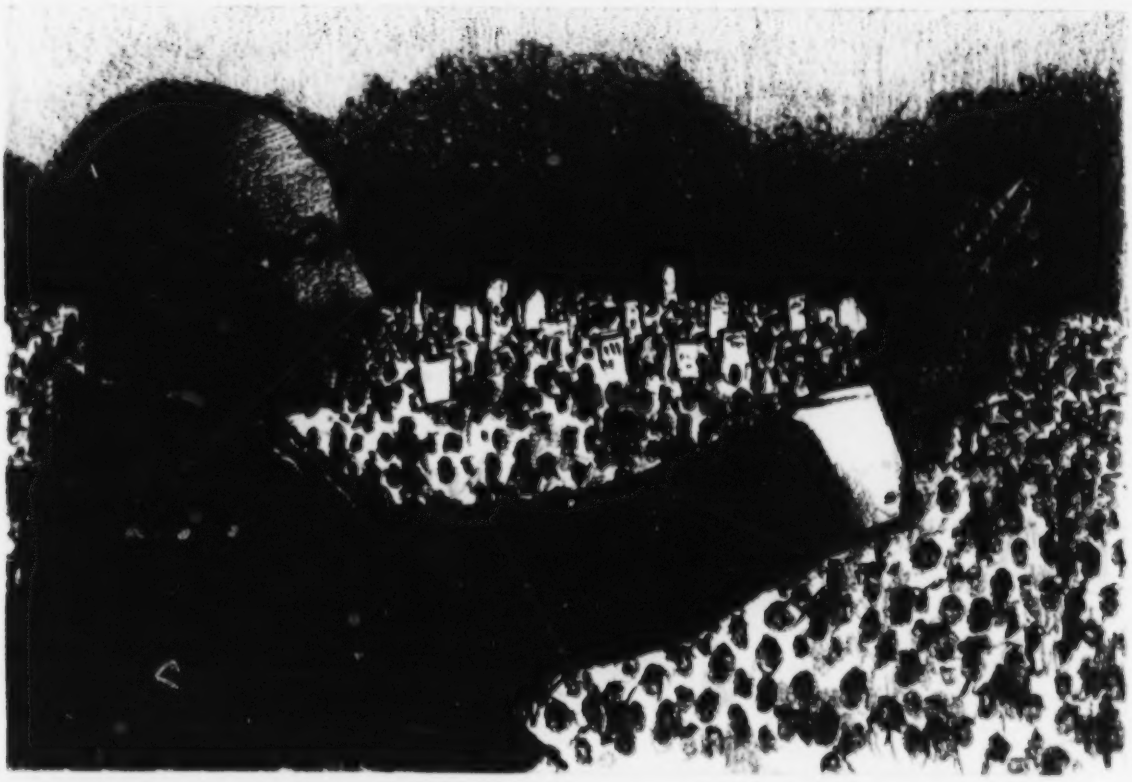

The spirit and influence of Du Bois and others was jubilantly manifested that day.

The day after his death, on August 28, 1963, the spirit and influence of W.E.B. Du Bois, and others like him who devoted their lives to tearing away at the veil of color, were jubilantly manifested. That day, more than 250,000 people of all colors gathered together peacefully and listened to Dr. Martin Luther King deliver his now-famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the March in Washington, D.C.

They listened also to the announcement made by Roy Wilkins, then Executive Director of the NAACP, that the "grand old man" whose work had helped make such a gathering possible, had died the night before in Ghana.

Some people said W.E.B. Du Bois was ahead of his time. They called him a prophet because he saw things that others didn't see. One thing is evident. While other people hid from the world, afraid of different cultures, different ideologies, Du Bois was not afraid to seek the truth, and to look it squarely in the face. He was not afraid to act upon his new insights and to discard ill-fitting philosophies. His life manifested this search to understand people and the world, and to find a way for all people to live together peacefully.

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". . .exceptionally fine job. . .highlighting those aspects of his life most relevant and valuable for young readers and others today."

— David Du Bois
President of the
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation, Inc.

Resolution from the 1921 Pan African Congress in Paris: ***"To the World: The absolute equality of the races, physical, political and social, is the founding stone of world and human advancement. No one denies great differences of gift, capacity and attainment among individuals of all races, but the voice of Science, Religion and practical Politics is one in denying the God-appointed existence of super races or of races naturally and inevitably and eternally inferior."***

From "Africa and the American Negro Intelligentsia (1954)"
***Presence Africaine,* Dec. 1954 - January 1955**

"The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colorline, — the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."

From "Of the Dawn of Freedom" Essay
***The Souls of Black Folk,* W.E.B. Du Bois**

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